

Iida Municipal Toyama Junior High School, Grade 8

Toyama GO! Time – Discovering and Sharing the Charm of the Toyama Region

Eighth-grade students at Toyama Junior High School in Iida City undertook a year-long project to rediscover and promote the unique appeal of Toyama, a mountainous area in southern Nagano. Despite its rich natural environment and cultural heritage, Toyama faces challenges such as declining recognition and population. To address these issues, the students launched an integrated studies program called Toyama GO! Time, working in three teams to explore and communicate local attractions.

Team 1: Festival PR Squad

This group focused on the Shimotsuki Festival, a centuries-old traditional ritual. They researched its origins, the types of masks used, and the sacred dances performed during the event. Using their findings, they designed impactful posters and began creating a promotional video using Google Earth. They paid close attention to layout, font, and color to make the materials visually engaging. Their next goal is to refine and distribute the completed video to a wider audience.

Team 2: Oni-Giri Lab (Local Food Innovation)

The Oni-Giri Lab team took on the challenge of creating a new local specialty: Jingisu Onigiri, or oni-giri rice balls featuring jingisu, a regional dish made with seasoned meats like wild boar, venison, and horse. The team wanted to create a food that would make visitors say, “You can’t leave Toyama without trying this!” They tested their product at a local event called Wasshoi Toyama, handing out samples and collecting feedback through surveys. To attract attention and celebrate local ingredients, they came up with a unique catchphrase: “Delicious, you’ve got to eat it – cho konnani oishikute!” (A playful pun in Japanese featuring the words for horse (uma), deer (shika), and wild boar (inoshishi) – all local game meats.) The team plans to refine the product and collaborate with local businesses to make it commercially viable.

Team 3: Nature and Tourism Team

This team worked to promote Toyama's natural beauty and tourism assets. They conducted interviews with local outdoor tour providers and newcomers who had opened shops to revitalize the region. They learned tips on using social media effectively and discovered both the strengths and challenges of their hometown. Although they successfully took photos for a promotional video, they realized the need for stronger planning and clearer shared goals within their team. Moving forward, they aim to improve their coordination and deliver more impactful messaging.



Looking Ahead: Energizing Toyama's Future

Through this project, the students rediscovered what makes Toyama special and built stronger ties with their local community. The experience helped them recognize regional issues as their own and sparked a desire to help shape a brighter future for the area. Carrying the spirit of Toyama GO! Time, they are committed to continuing their journey of learning, discovery, and action.